

MEETING NOTES
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PTAC)
TUESDAY, APRIL 26, 2016 @ 7:00 PM
BROOKLINE TOWN HALL, ROOM 408
333 WASHINGTON STREET, BROOKLINE MA 02446

PTAC members present: Abby Swaine (Chair), Deborah Dong, Linda Jason, Sherry Flashman (note taker), and Jane Gould.

7:00 CALL MEETING TO ORDER, APPOINT NOTE TAKER AND APPROVE MINUTES FROM MARCH 31, 2016 MEETING.

Minutes approved.

7:05 TAKE PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA.

There was no public comment.

7:15 DISCUSS ANY UPDATES ON I-90 ALLSTON INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Abby reported that Gus Driessen missed the last (April 7) meeting of the Interchange Task Force. Abby met with him though to prepare for a meeting on Thursday, April 28th with Paul Nelson head of MASCO. The purpose is to identify their interests in bus service and transit connections as relates to the I-90 Allston Interchange planning. Linda suggested asking if MASCO could provide information on the origins and destinations on trips taken by Brookline residents.

Abby reported that MASCO has some interest to run vehicles to West Station and to Harvard Square. They may be an ally in keeping bus/shuttle route options open. Abby also contacted the Focus 40 (MassDOT future long term planning initiative) to see if they would include the I90 Interchange in their planning effort.

Abby announced that the Focus 40 public planning process will launch on Tuesday, May 24th 6:30pm at Curry Student Center, Northeastern University.

We also discussed the MBTA bus #47, which goes from Roxbury over the BU Bridge to Central Square and comes near the Interchange. The idea was proposed that the MBTA might be able to extend the route towards the Interchange. Gus thinks the only crossing route would be Malvern Street given the high elevation on the other streets and difficulties of considering Babcock Street. But, Malvern requires the taking of the machine shop property. This might require an eminent domain taking. Gus recommends that MassDOT study the feasibility of using Malvern. He comes to the table with good professional experience, so we are fortunate to have him representing Brookline on the Interchange Task Force

Someone noted that Craig Bolon is on a Blue Ribbon committee to study the option of taking part of the Hancock Village property for protected open space. There is debate about how an approved 40B development property would be valued in terms of any eminent domain taking cost. This may impact other future developments in Brookline.

Abby also reported on a recent WBUR story on traffic issues in Greater Boston. The story interviewed a teacher who commutes to Brookline from Ipswich. Kara Brewton told Abby that Brookline's Planning and Community Development department had done a survey of all town employees (except teachers) a

couple of years ago to identify where employees were commuting from and parking impacts and needs. Results found that numbers of Brookline employees commuted in from rather far distances.

7:30 DISCUSS MISC MBTA NEWS, SUCH AS ANY FROM APRIL 7 ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Paul Regan provided Abby with the recent MBTA report on Fare Evasion that was recently reported on April 25th in the Boston Globe. Regan explained that the figures in the Globe story were somewhat misleading ("The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority is losing as much as \$42 million annually from fare evasion on commuter trains, Green Line trolleys, and buses, according to figures released Monday by the T and its commuter rail operator" Boston Globe 4/25/16)

The T will begin a pilot of rear door observation/readers using a fare reader. At Coolidge Corner, Jane reported they have people with fare readers, but they don't seem to use them during rush hour. This is only at Coolidge Corner. All the back doors are kept open.

The Globe article noted complaints that Green Line riders have had about fare evasion. The fact that the Green Line is above ground means that many passengers board via the rear doors which do not include a machine that can validate fares on tickets and monthly passes. The FMCB report estimates \$1.3m-\$4.5 million lost on the Green Line.

Though the Globe reported that the Commuter rail is the source of the largest losses, according to Regan, the bigger sources of loss of fares are on buses and the commuter rail. Bus drivers tend to show more leniency, especially with adolescents. We surmised this might be because they get to know the bus riders better since they drive the same routes with some consistency. Abby reported that Brian Kane at the MBTA knows all about this.

The MBTA plans to use fare validation methods for 8 weeks on the Green Line at every surface platform during the morning peak commute. They will assess how much revenue they could recoup with improved fare collections. Depending on results, they will then move with rear door automatic validators and spot checkers. Linda suggested that the MBTA notify the Tab to inform riders and to have the Tab to follow the story.

New Priorities for Service Delivery Policy. The MBTA is supposed to do service reviews and set priorities every two years. Presentations at the last Fiscal management Control Board meeting focused on: fare collections, electricity management and service delivery. Every transit system must do these assessments to qualify for federal funding. The T is identifying new metrics to evaluate. For the subway and Green Line, they are going to evaluate:

- 1- Passenger wait times and travel time
- 2- Passenger comfort- the % of travel time spent below the load threshold of 140% of the seats filled.
There is current automatic counting of the numbers of passengers that enter and deboard.
- 3- On subways, the amount of time spent below the threshold of floor area covered

Current priorities are to reach dense populations and to be sure to provide coverage in low-income areas.

Deborah shared her experience of occasional trips to Waltham via Uber. Uber can be an affordable alternative in some situations and may prove to be increasingly used in areas like south Brookline where transit is infrequent and transfers are time-consuming. It is to be hoped that private services do not have a negative effect on existing and potential public transit in those areas.

Electricity Management on Green Line.

Service is limited by how much power is available in the tunnels. By FY18, they will pledge to buy additional capacity, which must be bought in advance. The electricity needed in winter is higher than in summer.

MBTA Advisory Board Annual Budget Report. Abby brought copies. The report paints a positive picture. But the big demand is personnel and unfunded pension liability. While the T is improving balancing the operating budget, there is still huge debt interest owed. Jane mentioned the other innovation of \$12.3M using Uber for Para transit. The Advisory Board has a \$400K annual budget to support its functions.

8:00 PRIORITIZE /ORGANIZE FUTURE WORK ON:

- MBTA BUS & SUBWAY SERVICE (E.G., SIGNAL PRIORITIZATION, BUS STOP CENSUS, BEACONSFIELD ACCESS, WINTER OPS, SERVICE DELIVERY POLICY)
- SERVICE FOR UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS & AREAS (E.G., BHS STUDENTS, ELDERS, SOUTH BROOKLINE)
- COORDINATING WITH OTHER GROUPS (E.G., MBTA AB, MBTA FMCB, LIVABLE STREETS, ABC, MASCO, MAPC, CAMBRIDGE)
- BUILDING TRANSIT INTO BROOKLINE DEVELOPMENT (E.G., PTDM POLICY, GATEWAY EAST, HANCOCK VILLAGE)
- BIG-PICTURE OPPORTUNITIES (E.G., MASSDOT FOCUS40 PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION NETWORK COMPANIES, SHUTTLES, CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT)

We picked up discussion of other focus areas previously proposed as responsibilities for PTAC members. The conversation focused on completing the Bus Amenities Survey that we had previously discussed undertaking. We agreed to share this as a joint project for the Committee in the coming months. For the next meeting, each person should come in with ideas related to: the purpose, what we are looking for, resources needed, scheduling, what are bus stop amenity standards (Deb has). We are to send other ideas to Deb to help our discussion at the next meeting.

For the larger list of focus areas, we need to be realistic about what can be accomplished and what expectations are for each PTAC member. For the next meeting, each person should come in with recommendations on what is of most interest to them and what they see as priority tasks to undertake in their areas of responsibility as previously assigned.

Linda and Jane committed to ride the afternoon BHS 51 bus route to get a clearer picture of the route and current operation. Sherry and Deb offered to meet up in South Brookline and to bring them home.

8:50 SET DATE & AGENDA TOPICS FOR MAY MEETING.

The next meeting is TUESDAY, MAY 17, 7:00 pm.

9:00 ADJOURN.